



Crafting and Deploying a Communications Plan

About Communication Plans

Once you've established your Connections Audiences, it's time to think about outreach. Just like other channels you employ through the recruitment cycle—like email, social media, or print—Connections allows you to build Communication Plans to reach specific student populations within your overall Audience pool.

In the Audience stage, you focused on selecting broad groups of students determined by three key factors (Graduating Class, Geography, and Score Band). The Communication Plans stage encourages you to refine your outreach to those Audiences using the following criteria:

- GPA
- Score minimum
- State
- Zip Code
- Race/Ethnicity
- Major
- Gender
- High-Challenge Environment (as determined by the College Board [Landscape](#) resource)

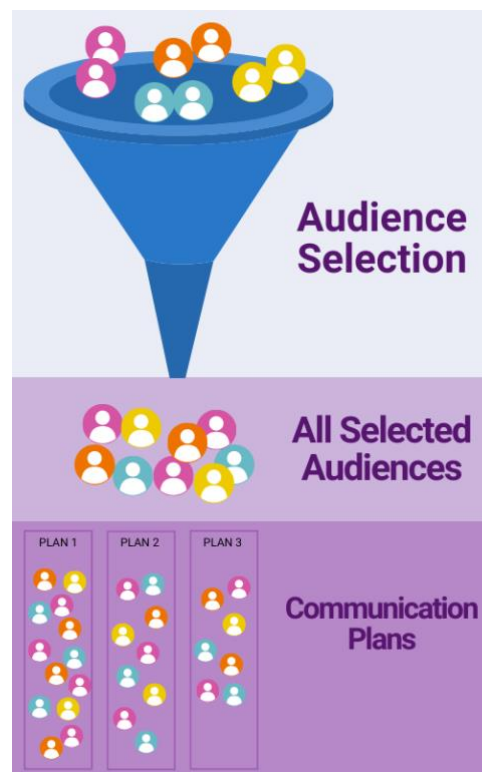
Within Connections, your institution can craft up to 10 Communication Plans with up to 12 messages included in each plan. Using the intuitive interface, you can then select one or more Filter options for each Communication Plan.

Once you've published a plan, it cannot be edited, so be sure to utilize the **Communication Plans Workbook** prior to building a Communication Plan in Connections. Remember—you can build and publish Communication Plans over the course of your subscription, so no need to worry about having all 10 plans ready on day one.

Using the Audiences & Communication Plans Workbook

The Audiences & Communication Plans Workbook is designed to help you define your Communication Plan strategy for Connections. Note that in each of the worksheets New York has been grayed or crossed out, as NY students will not be in Connections in Year 1. Here's how to use the workbook:

1. Begin with the first tab, **Audiences Selection Sandbox**. The sandbox allows you to consider potential Audiences you may wish to select in Connections.
2. If you're interested in the [National Student Access Group](#), choose "yes" from the dropdown in the cream-colored band at the top.
3. Then, using the Audience selection criteria (Graduating Class, Geography, and Score Band), simply insert a lowercase "x" into the cell you want to capture. If you'd like to select a whole row or column, select "yes" from the blue band.



4. Once you've made your selections, check Column P in the upper right for a running tally of your total Audiences (and confirm that this fits with your [2023-24 Access Plan!](#)).
5. Once you've completed your work in the sandbox, move over to the next tab, **Audiences Summary**, for a clean readout of all of your Audience selections. On this page, you'll find a full list of your selections by Graduating Class (including an indicator for National Student Access Group), delineated by Geography and inclusive of every score band you've chosen. As you move into the Communication Plan elements of this workbook, use this tab as a reference "cheat-sheet" to make sure you haven't left any Audiences on the table.

The next few tabs all work in conjunction together.

6. The **Comm Plan Summary** tab will give you a look at all of your Communication Plan selections by plan number and by Filter. This sheet will auto-populate just about every field selected from the individual Comm Plans that follow. Remember, Communication Plans in Connections will follow each other in terms of priority, so order your plans from the most narrow criteria to the most broad – **and note that a student can only be in one active Comm Plan at a time**. Use this summary to check your plans and check your logic. For example, if Comm Plan 1 specifies all in-state students, and Comm Plan 2 specifies all women – no women living in-state will receive messages through Comm Plan 2.
7. To populate the Comm Plan Summary, begin with **Comm Plan 1**. Simply add a lowercase "x" in the cell to right of your selection to indicate that this field should be a Filter for this plan. Each tab contains columns for each of the Filters listed above (with the exception of Zip Code, which we'll talk about below). As you add criteria on a Comm Plan tab, the corresponding field will populate in the Comm Plan Summary. All ten Comm Plan tabs are identical in layout – the choices you make with them, however, are up to you! The one exception to the Filters in the Comm Plan Summary is Zip Code. As the list of domestic zips is extensive, we'll ask you to enter these by-hand in row 5 of the Summary. To enter these values, you'll need to enter the password: "Connections" to unlock the cells.

As you map out your plans, be sure to return intermittently to the Summary tab to check your logic. Keep this resource on-hand for all your Audience and Communication Plan brainstorming.

Learn more or schedule a consultation at
cbsearch.collegeboard.org.

